constitution and various independent institutions. The typical sign that transition has begun is understood when these civilianised military authoritarian incumbents, for whatever reason, began to modify their own rules in the direction of providing more secure guarantees for the rights of individuals and groups.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party is committed to that liberalisation through electoral process, the practice of redefining and extending the fundamental and civil rights of the people of Bangladesh. By liberalisation, I mean the process of making effective certain rights that protect both individuals and social groups from arbitrary or illegal acts committed by the state or by third parties that include foreign powers that practice grassroots imperialism in Bangladesh through manipulation of the foreign aid market or by channeling foreign aid through local NGOs.

On the level of the individuals, these guarantees include the classical elements of the liberal tradition -- *habeas corpus*; sanctity of the private property and contract; the right to be defended in a fair trial according to pre-established laws; freedom of movement, speech and petition; and so forth.

The trouble is only partly that officials will not listen to private citizens. To a considerable extent it is also that private citizens will not take responsibility in public matters in such a society.

On a social level, we expect the government must not only allocate rights to one person or another but it must also decide whether or not to make the right alienable through markets or otherwise. The initial allocation serves to reflect, to legitimate, and to reinforce social understandings about presumptive rights of ownership, and that allocation has an important causal connection to individual perceptions of the good or right in question.

For example, a decision to give employees a right to organise, farmers a right to be free from water pollution, or women a right not to be subjected to sexual harassment will have an impact on social attitudes toward labour organisation, clean water, and sexual harassment. The allocation therefore has an effect on social attitudes toward the relevant rights and on their valuation by both current users and would-be users of those rights. If those liberalised practices are not too immediately and obviously threatening to the regime, they tend to accumulate, become institutionalised and democratised, thereby raising the effective and perceived costs of their eventual annulment.

The primary challenge to the process of democratisation of the



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